





TO TEACH THE NEGRO  
HISTORY.

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A SUGGESTION.

BY

JOHN STEPHENS DURHAM, B.S., C.E.,

Formerly United States Minister to Haiti and Chargé d'Affaires to Santo Domingo.

PHILADELPHIA:

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1022 MARKET STREET.

masters are prodigal, and the slaves are wasteful; and this results from the very nature of slavery, and the influence it has on all the motives of human action. What stimulus has the slave to work, other than the lash? He argues thus: why should I fatigue myself with work? I am bound to work all my life—I reap not the fruits of my labor—I increase not my comfort by increasing my labor. What motive have I to save? My master is bound to provide for me as long as I live; he gets all the fruits of my labor—hence his whole policy is to work as little as possible, and to consume as much as possible—to save nothing. On the contrary, what are the effects of freedom upon any population? Every individual in the community is stimulated by a desire to become wealthy, distinguished, independent, and powerful. All the faculties of each individual are expanded, and fully developed; each acquiring all he can, and taking care of what he does acquire; hence the mass of production of all that is essential to the comfort and happiness of man, is infinitely greater in a free, than in a slave population. The gentleman from Petersburg, and the gentleman from Brunswick, both seem to be well satisfied with slavery as it is, among us, and seem to be in a state of perfect security for the present time, and all time to come, on this subject. They are fortunate gentlemen; and if they can persuade a majority of the people of Virginia to think with them, there will be nothing done on this subject. The question is now fairly before the people, which is all I desire at this time; they will consider of it—they will decide upon it. The next legislature that meets here, will be fully instructed on this subject. Let the decision of the people be what it may, I shall cheerfully submit. I bow with submission, to the will of the majority, in all matters of state.

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*This pamphlet is a condensation of a course of six talks which I had a year ago with the higher classes of the Hampton and Tuskegee schools. The cordial encouragement which I enjoyed at the hands of teachers and students at both institutions has suggested this publication, with the hope that it may be of some help in the important work which they are doing.*

*J. S. D.*

*Philadelphia, September 28, 1897.*

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JOHN STEPHENS DURHAM, B. S., C. E.

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## TO TEACH THE NEGRO HISTORY.

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TWENTY years ago I entered a rude, obscure negro school as its teacher. Since that time I have had some experience as teacher and student, extending to the highest organization of modern teaching methods. Yet, nowhere else have I seen more urgent demand for the best training and the finest spirit than in the little dilapidated huts which served as schools for colored children in the South. Nowhere else is the power of the teacher for good more generally felt in the individual and in the communal life. Nowhere else is the teacher thrown more on his own resources. It is to this important class of public workers that I desire especially to address myself by way of suggestion. It is a familiar story which I shall tell, but it is one whose importance to the growing generation cannot be over-estimated.

After nearly four years' residence in two republics in which people of the colored race govern themselves, and in which they are making remarkable progress, considering the obstacles which they must overcome, I returned to the United States impressed that, in our own country, the negro has greater opportunities for advancement, and gives indications of more rapid, more essential, progress than in any other country in which I know members of the race to reside in relatively large numbers. I began then a series of studies in order to determine whether or not the impression really had foundation in fact. It took

the course of an historical examination into the relations of the negro's presence in this country to the development of our political and industrial system. By force of circumstances these studies have been interrupted, and it is not probable that I shall be able soon to resume them. I have gone far enough, however, to be convinced that what was a mere impression four years ago is sustained by careful study of our national growths, that the United States stands out as pre-eminently the country in which negroes reside in large numbers where they are on the verge of entry into competition with the white race in the various activities which make for individual and for national progress. An unbiased and philosophic method of teaching the growing generation is necessary to the making the best of this opportunity; and it is as one student to other students that I address myself to the teachers by way of mere suggestion, in the hope that I may be of some use to the young men and young women who are beginning their life-work in the humble negro schools.

Much that I have to say about the teaching of negro boys and girls would apply to the teaching of any class of future American citizens. The work with our race is special only in so far as there are characteristics to be attacked, prejudices to be overcome, points of view to be changed which interfere with the full development of character and intelligence. You are the makers of character. You cannot make negro character, nor can you make white character. You cannot direct intelligence along negro lines nor along white lines. You can eradicate the injurious things which have become a part of our people's character and which have lowered their points of view. These things rooted out, the points of

view once elevated to sweep the universe along a student-like tangent, your special work is done and you have your pupils ready for true education, the making of the best possible of the soul, mind and body of the human being.

First of all, I would suggest, clearly impress upon the minds of your pupils that a fact in history, that is to say, in human experience, has very little value except in its relationships. One prominent fact, such as finds its way into "school histories," is prominent because it is a point on which a series of antecedent facts converge themselves, and because it goes on with other focal facts to converge on some other important point in human experience. It is, indeed, only late in this century that science has become comparative, historical in method. This method consists chiefly in the grouping of known facts, formerly isolated or rejected as insignificant, their classification historically, the inference of tendency or growth, and the suggestion of principles on which to build for the future. No fact is unimportant. No source of information is thoughtlessly to be rejected. The great university work now pursued so vigorously on both sides of the Atlantic; the persistent search for original documents; the insistence on getting away from what Mr. Greene calls "drum-and-trumpet history," the development, in short, of history as the basis of sociological research and generalization, may, indeed, be said to be one of the advances of our own generation. Get into touch with that work. Study until you are thoroughly in sympathy with it. Your school history will then become merely an index, and you will be the interpreter of growths indicated by prominent facts stated in your textbooks.

You have some work in making a boy see that, in walking across your school-room floor, he experiences motion with three relationships: one, his own voluntary motion with reference to the surface of the earth; another, with the earth with reference to its own axis; and a third, with the earth in its onward progress around its orbit. It is one of the difficult lessons of the backwoods school; but once learned, it is important in its bearing on your teaching of physical geography and familiar astronomy. It is important that your boy should learn that, as a member of the human family, he experiences motion with different relationships. In his relations as an individual, moving along his own lines, he has duties and responsibilities and opportunities subject to his will and his energy. In his relations as a member of a neglected, opposed people with reference to the national community into which he has been born a unit, he moves with his race; but I must depart from my figurative comparison to say that his character and his intelligence can have great influence on that movement. As a member of the universal human family he is experiencing social, moral motion along with all other human beings, an atom in the onward roll of humanity's mass energy toward what we believe to be a higher civilization.

If your boy has learned this lesson well, he will soon see that the most important fact in his existence is not that he is a black boy born in the United States. It is the most disagreeable fact, doubtless; but the sooner he can be taught the difference between its being disagreeable and its being of paramount importance, the sooner will he begin the real preparation for the heavy life-work before him. Heine is reported as having been accus-

tomed to say, both before and after his apostasy, that Judaism is not a religion but a misfortune. The attitude of too many of our leaders in directing thought, I think, is that they put too much stress on the misfortune of being a colored man in the United States, that they tend to make us morbid, that our minds are to that extent diverted from the real object of teaching our boys and girls. That real object, I should say, is to have them really measure the gravity of the misfortune, to take from it whatever opportunity it may afford for usefulness, and to inspire the will and the application to plunge into the various directions of human service. The careers of many eminent men show that, though nothing else can be more embarrassing, disagreeable—disheartening, indeed—than proscription, it carries with it its own compensation when properly regarded, in that it invites to more concentrated effort on the part of the individual. The important fact, therefore, in your black boy's experience is that he is a healthy human being, born a member of one of the most advanced and active national communities on the globe.

Inculcate that fact: drive it home. On the one hand, the negro has been ignorantly denounced by historians and ethnologists who have not studied and written with reference to the value of relationships. On the other hand, colored historians, in a spirit of resentment quite natural, all things considered, have written books to excite what they call race pride. Teach your boy that nature did not make one special creation and color it white, and another special creation and paint it black. If science insists on anything as fundamental, it is that nature has been doing her work silently and irresistibly for some time; that each variety of the human species

is in the place which it has earned; that racial distinctions are mere incidents in her work; that her own energy is daily overcoming the barriers set up by man, and that the faculties with which she endows every individual enable him to assist consciously in her work of selection by taking them to be the germ of opportunity and by cultivating them to live his best.

Your great difficulty is—at least, this is my experience—that what seem to be object-lessons to the contrary present themselves on every hand, apparently to refute your lesson and to confuse your pupil. Indeed, it is hard for the teacher himself to learn the lesson thoroughly. The fact that he must teach in an exclusively colored school impels at first the bitter reflection that he is shut out from the open competition of his profession for which he longs. The wealthy philanthropists who support his school are reluctant to give other than menial work to their beneficiaries in counting-houses, stores and factories. Dirty “Colored Waiting Rooms” and filthy “Jim Crow Cars” are his entertainment at the hands of corporations chartered by the very State, perhaps, in which he casts an unavailing vote. Nothing short of the historical study of history, if I may use the expression, can counteract the influence of the bitter object-lessons driven into his very soul from the moment when some childish slight impels him to ask his mother what difference there may be between himself and his white playmate next door.

I would suggest, therefore, that, before entering upon the study of the negro in America, the teacher make as comprehensive a survey as possible of general history, using the results of the latest researches. To follow the European races through their various amalgamations,

through barbarism and slavery to the tribal and family states; to see how comparatively recently their social life was marked by feticism, polytheism, human sacrifices, perhaps, and certainly by family trees without clearly defined paternal roots—this, done in a student-like spirit, prepares one to overcome the soul-stifling influences of our daily experience.

The African tribes were misbehaving with all the abandon of their white brethren north of them—according to our present standards of behavior. Impartial workers in several branches of science have made for us a very simple and logical story of sequence to show how the African came to make but little progress while the European came to have one God, one wife, and to establish individual ownership in land. The allied sciences of archaeology and philology and history show that nature has had but one prescription for the races. It is training up the same hard road, through slavery and barbarism, through shame and humiliation, into competition with more advanced races in commerce, industry and science. Along that road alone lies racial growth, and then the breaking down of racial lines. Fifty years ago, who would have predicted the present position of Japan among the nations? Among my treasures is a letter from George William Curtis, referring to this race matter, closing with these words: "They will not despair who have seen what I have seen in thirty years."

When we examine impartially this story of humanity's growth, we begin to appreciate what a mere incident is this negro problem in the United States. We become no longer mere defenders or advocates, the attitude into which prejudice would drive us. We are impressed with the sense of duty to know just where this incident

fits in with humanity's progress, and to prepare ourselves and others whom we may influence to be in accord with the procession, and to exert our powers in an intelligent, hastening spirit. For however ingenious our statesmen may have been in obscuring the true nature of this incident, in striving to separate it, the negro question has always been the white man's question; and until our people shall have grown to achieve absolute liberty in co-operation and competition, our strivings must of necessity be most important in their relations to the moral, social and industrial development of the national community. It is the story of the negro's presence in this country from the landing of the first cargo of slaves on Virginia soil. This story is simple, I think; and I desire to suggest the lines along which we have come to the problem of to-day.

The study of the African races prepares one to know the kind of human beings which were seized by the traders for the American market and to study the effects of the slave trade. The report made by the committee appointed at Plymouth, England, late in the eighteenth century, shows how unpromising were our beginnings on this continent. Despite the sometimes plausible arguments to the contrary, there seems to have been but little variety in the character of the native Africans who reached our shores. It is true that they were of different tribes and of different types. Some were captives sold to the traders by their captors. Others were low types who idled about the swamps near the coasts, and who were attracted on board slavers by offers of showy presents. Still, the terrors of the passage to America seem to have reduced them, with rare exceptions, to the same level. If this experience were not enough, their pitiable condi-



tion after leaving the auction-block on their arrival completed the work of unmanning them. The Indian slave could always hope to escape. He was near his tribe as long as he was on the same continent. By walking the forests and swimming the streams, when the first opportunity for escape should present itself, he could rejoin his family and take up the hatchet to avenge the humiliation which he had suffered. Thus arose the fiction that the American Indian had something in his nature which prevented his being enslaved. The most warlike African whose spirit had survived the horrors of the inner passage could indulge in no such hope. To escape meant exposure to hostile white men and hostile red men alike, with a great body of water between him and his tribe. The herding in the slave quarters, the self-protective precautions generally taken by the master-class to deprive the slaves of all facilities for organization, made the beginning of the growths of the present colored citizen most unpromising.

The study of the conditions peculiar to the different tribes in Africa, and of the horrors of the passage to America, not only serves to show how entirely unmanned our progenitors must have been, but it also prepares the way for examining the beginnings of human growths among the slaves. An examination of the histories of individual colonies and States, together with the biographical writings of the colonial period, show that the slaves were early in their residence subjected to three distinct influences, and that these influences produced distinct growths which may be traced down to the present day. These growths may be classified as the agricultural, the mansion-house and the skilled workman. Had I been able to continue my studies, I would have

pursued this branch of inquiry thoroughly; for I am satisfied that these growths have developed all of the difficulties as well as all of hopeful opportunities which mark the American negro problem of to-day. It is my purpose to indicate them in a general way.

The agricultural laborers are the most conservative class under the most favorable conditions. In national movements this conservatism has, at important points in history, proved beneficial. With a large mass of slaves, however, the removal from all influences of progress, when no change could possibly be for the worse, the growth of the farm-hand from within was a very slow one. The promiscuous intercourse of the sexes, the restrictive measures taken to protect the master class, and the insistent retention of their African superstitions and customs, made the farm-hand growth very slow indeed.

The life of the planter was one of leisure and vice. He rose from his bed at any hour that suited him. His days were spent in horse-racing, cock-fighting, gambling and grog-drinking. I do not mean to say that there were not many families who were notable exceptions to this rule; but I am dealing with general influences, and there can be no doubt as to the correctness with which this characterizes the class as a class. The marital vow was lightly broken by easy abandon to the attractions of any "likely" slave woman, and the master class distinguished itself by reaching such a point of degradation as to sell their own offspring. I refer particularly to the slave-owners of English descent. In Louisiana, as in the Spanish and French West Indies, this custom the local records show to have been less general.

It was in contact with the luxurious side of the planter's life that the growth of the mansion-house servant

began. Likely women and quick, clean, bright men were selected from the quarters. Their work required that they dress neatly and that they be clean. In a short time knots disappeared from their joints and their carriage became more erect. They fared better in every way, and they enjoyed human relations with the family. As they began to regard themselves as superior to the great mass at the quarters, whose numbers were so dreaded by the master class, and to draw away from them, they were permitted more freedom relatively. This class soon developed into the most intelligent type of the slave; but it was essentially a slave growth. This contact, as has been indicated, in characterizing the morality of the mansion-house, created false standards and made them a part of the very nature of the house-servant. More hopeful, indeed, was the natural demoralization of the quarters than the artificial corruption of the mansion-house. No race or class of people, set apart, as were the slaves, could have resisted this corruption. The manservant naturally imitated what he saw in the life of the master whom he adored, the fine gentleman whose clothes he wore and whose very mannerism he made the object of his most studious, though grotesque, mimicry. If he put his master to bed in a condition of intoxication, he, too, could drink from the same bottle and put himself to bed in the same lordly condition. When several masters went to bed after a night of carousal, their servants adjourned to a safe spot to gamble and to drink as the fine gentlemen had done. If the master had several mistresses, the house-servant did not lose time in emulating the example. The women were exposed to the master from girlhood. No physical comforts were denied them in the relation of concubinage, and there soon developed

a class which preferred that state to the family relation within the lines of their own race. Thus the mansion-house influence produced a more intelligent individual with a superior refinement of manners; but that contact has proved to be the very damnation of negro manhood and womanhood.

While the agricultural laborer was left to himself with nothing but an evolution, almost without objective stimulus, on which to depend for growth, and while the mansion-house servant touched the masters only on the side of their vicious indulgences, there was another growth which has been a pervading influence throughout the entire development of the colored citizen. Even in the primitive work of the colonial plantation, prompt attention was required for "odd jobs." Tools were to be sharpened and mended, wagons repaired, barns raised, tires put on, horses shod, harness mended, bricks made. At the seaports, sailing-vessels required repairs of all sorts. "Handy" men were taken from the quarters to do these jobs. As each developed notable skill, his work became specialized. Thus the natural division of labor came about, and the learning of skilled trades followed as a matter of course. The owner of a skilled mechanic not only had the assurance of seeing his work done at any time that might suit his convenience, but he also found it profitable to purchase such slaves in order to hire them out by the week or month to his neighbors. Civilization's most fruitful germ lies in the mastery of a tool. A man grows every time he conscientiously makes something. This growth, this ennobling influence, could not be checked, even though the skilled hand were that of a slave. Aside from this generalization, however, it must be remembered that the mechanical influence

marked out a path of growth quite characteristic and peculiar. While the mechanic was exposed to the cringing jealousy of the other slaves, he commanded their respect. They looked up to him in spite of their envy, and he was the influential man among them. He had the confidence of his master. These inspired self-respect, the first lesson in the making of a citizen in a democracy. He enjoyed freedom on the public roads when his fellows could not pass the plantation limits, for it was not uncommon that his work required long absences from his master. His work required that he use measures and figures, and often that he read, write and make a sketch to scale. Above all considerations, however, he had his separate home with the mother of his children, in great measure removed from the influences of the slave-quarter and of the mansion-house. At the opening of the Revolution, every section had its slave blacksmiths, wheelwrights, masons, carpenters, while shoemakers, cabinetmakers, and tailors followed as work became more and more specialized, and the skilled black workmen more and more reliable and profitable as investments. Along the coast were ship-carpenters and caulkers. Every one of their little homes was a centre of moral impulse for the working out of what the American nation calls the negro problem to-day.

I think that you will find these growths common to all parts of the country. While following them through nearly three centuries, it is also necessary to consider the differences in degree of opportunity, which I think may be clearly traced to the varying ratios of negro and white populations in different localities.

In New Hampshire, at the beginning of the Revolution, the proportion of population was one hundred

whites to one black. In Massachusetts, it was sixty to one; in Rhode Island, twenty to one; in New York, New Jersey and Pennsylvania, it was about eight to one; in Maryland, it was five to three; in North Carolina, it was two to one; in Virginia and Georgia, it was one to one; in South Carolina, it was one to two. In examining the laws relating to slaves in the different colonies, their severity followed these ratios very closely. In South Carolina, where there were two blacks to one white, the moral development of the slave was naturally regarded as more dangerous to the public peace than in New Hampshire, where there was only one black to one hundred whites. So it becomes a most interesting study to compare the laws, to note the differences in degree of opportunity, and the very different growths which were the result. The slaves who had been allowed six feet by sixteen inches of space when packed in the holds of slavers during the terrible voyage from Africa, who had danced for exercise daily on deck at the end of the cat-o'-nine-tails, who had panted and groaned below decks, only to note each day a greater stretch of water between them and their former associates, faced very different conditions, therefore, as they were distributed throughout the colonies. In New York they enjoyed the greatest freedom under the Dutch, but under the English, as their numbers increased, restrictions were imposed.

In the northern colonies the slaves were permitted to learn to read, and they were encouraged to marry and to rear their own families. They formed their little societies, and they breathed in that spirit of liberty which animated the protests leading up to the independence of the colonies. Nothing can be more curiously contradictory than this struggle of innate humanity in these people to

make the most of their opportunities, aided by men who could not qualify equality, and in the face of hereditary legislation due to the war which interest waged on conscience.

In the southern colonies, the localities of high ratios of negro population, we see every self-protecting precaution taken by the master-class. Doctor MacMaster, of the University of Pennsylvania, gives this terse summary of the restrictions throughout these colonies:

“Lashes were prescribed for every black who kept a dog, who owned a gun, who had a ‘periagua,’ who hired a horse, who went to a merry-making, who attended a funeral, who rode along the highway, who bought, or sold, or traded without his owner’s consent. Slaves were forbidden to learn to write or read writing, to give evidence against a white man, to travel in bands of more than seven unless a white man went with them, or to quit the plantation without leave. Should they do so, the first freeman they fell in with might give them twenty lashes on the bare back. If one returned a blow, it became lawful to kill him. For wandering about at night, or riding horses without permission, the punishment was whipping, cropping, or branding on the cheek. When his crime was murder or house-burning, the justices might, if it seemed best, command his right hand to be cut off, his head to be severed from the trunk, the body quartered, and the pieces hung up to public view. Next to murder, the worst offence a slave could commit was to run away. Then the Legislature could outlaw him, and any free white who met him might kill him at sight. To steal a negro was felony, to take his life while punishing him was not. Indeed, if a planter provided coarse food, coarse clothes and a rude shelter for his slaves; if he did

not work them more than fifteen hours out of twenty-four in summer, nor more than fourteen in winter, and gave them every Sabbath to themselves, he did quite as much for their comfort as the law required he should. Before the law a slave was a chattel, could be bought or sold, leased or loaned, mortgaged, bequeathed by will, or seized by the sheriff in satisfaction of a debt. Property he could neither hold nor acquire. If the State gave him land for his services in the war, the court bestowed it all upon the master. If he went forth and labored for a price, even with his owner's leave, the money was not his. Nothing could be left a slave by will. He could not call his life his own. To strike out his eye in the heat of passion, or to cut out his tongue, to maim him, to cruelly scald him, or deprive him of a member or a limb, was, indeed, an offence. But the sole punishment was a fine of one hundred pounds currency. To kill him outright cost the owner but a little more. Within these limits it was lawful to load him with irons, to confine him for any length of time in a cell, and to beat him and whip him till the blood ran in streams from the wounds, and he grew too weak to stand. Old advertisements are still extant in which runaway blacks are described by the scars left upon their bodies by the lash. When such lashings were not prescribed by the court, they were commonly given under the eye of the overseer or inflicted by the owner of the negro himself. In the great cities were often to be found men whose business it was to flog slaves. Such an one long lived in Charleston, and, when the beating was not done by contract, charged a shilling for each one whipped."

After the Revolution, you will see, the colored people of the North continued to progress under their favorable



conditions. In the South the increasing number of slaves and the pressure of moral sentiment from the North animated the master-class to make their hold on the slave more severe, if possible. The statutes record the sentiments of the several States. In South Carolina, for instance, you will find slaves classified as chattels personal. In Louisiana they were real property. In Kentucky they were real estate by the law of descent, but were liable as chattels to be taken in execution for the payment of the master's debts. In the old Maryland statute they were classified in chancery procedure as personal property, thus: "Specific articles, such as slaves, working beasts, animals of any kind, stock, furniture, plates, books, and so forth."

These, then, were our beginnings. In the North, where the number of slaves was no menace to the existing order of society, our progenitors had opportunities to take on civilization with less regard to occupation. In the South, where it was necessary for the whites to protect themselves, a system of repression was vigilantly pursued on every side, slackening its cruel bonds only where it interfered with the earning power of a trusted skilled workman.

When we reflect how few in comparison were the Northern negroes and the Southern skilled slaves, we face the conclusion that the negro's beginnings were as a cipher in the general community, so far as his voluntary action measured his influence. At the opening of the Revolution, says Doctor McMaster, "the great body of slaves were still as barbarous as the blacks who ran wild on the Gambia or along the banks of the river Congo. They were still as ignorant, as superstitious, as devoted worshippers of stocks and stones, as their most

remote ancestors. Spirits and ghosts, witches and devils, were to them as much realities as the men they spoke with or the wind they felt blow. The moon inspired them with peculiar awe; the darkness filled them with dread; nor would the boldest among them willingly go through a wood after sundown without a hare's foot in his hand. Of charms and evil eyes they lived in never-ending fear. Bright colors, gay clothes, glittering objects, were their delight. Of music and dance they were passionately fond. With fragments of a sheep's rib, with a cow's jaw and a piece of iron, with an old kettle and a bit of wood, with a hollow gourd and a few horse-hairs, they would fabricate instruments of music and play the most plaintive airs."

Our beginnings were those, therefore, of so many social ciphers, and we are now well advanced toward becoming social units. This growth is the object of our study. In using the word social, I desire to avoid all suggestion of the word society in its extended meaning. I want to think of society as the community of human beings, the community which consists of every man, woman and child. The community of which I desire you constantly to think is influenced by every member, whether he will it or not. In that sense every man is either a unit, fulfilling all of his duties, meeting all of his responsibilities, contributing his share to progress and to the cultivation of the social virtues, or less than a unit to the extent of his dereliction in his social relations. The slave was not a part of the social fabric so far as his personal effort made him a part. In the sense that his presence exerted a social influence in spite of himself, in spite of his master, it was, measured by every standard of social virtue, a negative influence.

There are two other geographical divisions, indicating special growths, which merit your attention—the Mississippi valley and the Northwest. Negro slaves were introduced in the Mississippi valley early in the eighteenth century. This slavery was one of the old patriarchal rather than the modern commercial type. Male slaves worked side by side in the fields with their masters, according to Judge Breese, the historian of early Illinois: and he describes the female slaves “in neat attire” going with their mistresses to matins and vespers, “both unmindful of the fetters with which a wicked policy had bound them.” Mr. Hinsdale quotes an ordinance of Louis XV., issued in 1724, requiring that all the slaves in the French colonies should be educated in the Apostolic Roman Catholic religion and be baptized, enjoining their owners to have these matters attended to within a reasonable time, under pain of an arbitrary fine. He also has a very interesting paragraph concerning the Indians as slaves and slave-holders: “The Western Indians were slave-holders. They followed the ancient and honorable custom of selling captives taken in war into slavery, often as the alternative of putting them to death, and among their best customers, from the early days of French colonization, were the white men, who often bought, it must be added, as acts of humanity. So many of these red slaves belonged to a single tribe that Pawnee, or ‘Pani,’ as the French wrote it, came to be the common word for slave irrespective of race, thus repeating the history of the word ‘Slav’ itself.”

In time, the Ohio river became the dividing-point of the Mississippi valley; and it is interesting to follow the development and division of sentiment regarding slavery which soon determined this dividing-point, dedicating

the country north of it to freedom and condemning that south of it to slavery.

Taking the opening of the Revolution, therefore, as our first point of retrospect, we see that within the social life of the slaves, from mere ciphers, quite different lines of growth had already begun to differentiate themselves. In the South Atlantic States they may be said to have made but little progress from the moral condition in which they were transported from the slave-ships. In the Middle and North Atlantic States, where the ratios range from one hundred to one to eight to one, they had only some personal freedom and were rapidly taking in civilization. In the Mississippi valley under the French rule they enjoyed all physical comforts and were contented; but they had not risen to that intellectual activity which characterized the slaves of New York and New England. You will be able to observe, too, that throughout the country the characteristic growths of the agricultural laborer, the mansion-house servant and the skilled workman had become clearly defined.

The period from the opening of the Revolution to the incorporation of Louisiana into our political system was most exciting. It opened full of hope. It was characterized by a bitter struggle for the universality of the truths expressed in our Declaration of Independence. It was a steadily losing fight, and the period closes with the public conscience benumbed, and with new conditions which none of the signers of the Declaration would have predicted at the beginning of the period, but little more than a quarter of a century before. It is difficult to be brief in making an orderly statement concerning this period; but as my entire paper purposes to be merely a suggestion for your own study, I will attempt it.

At the opening of the Revolution there was a feeling throughout the colonies, almost unanimous, that it was desirable to put an end to slavery. In the localities of large ratios there was an almost universal dread of the increase of an alien oppressed race, which, in spite of the terrible laws and customs for its repression, was already showing signs of discontent. This dread, together with candid observation of the effects upon the character and life of the slave-holding class, inspired among the leaders what may be designated as a statesmanlike fear for the future. In the localities of small ratios, where the slaves had reared families, organized their little societies and begun in a peaceful manner to agitate for their freedom, there was developed a sympathetic feeling for them and the conviction that slavery was a cruel wrong. These two motives, so different essentially, made possible harmonious action on the part of leaders from all sections for the restriction of the slave-trade with a view to ultimate abolition. Manumission at the hands of Southern masters came to be regarded as humane. In the North, communities which were amassing wealth out of the triangular trade in rum, slaves and molasses, combined against the introduction of slaves among themselves. In 1688 the Society of Friends at Germantown, Philadelphia, protested to the Yearly Meeting against buying, selling and holding men in slavery. In 1696 this Society promulgated this advice: "Members should discourage the introduction of slavery, and be careful of the moral and intellectual training of such as they hold in servitude." Previously, in 1641 and 1650, Massachusetts and Connecticut had passed acts against man-stealing. In 1712, Pennsylvania; in 1726, Virginia; in 1780, South Carolina passed acts to check the slave-trade. The British

Government, however, promptly annulled this legislation, and the movement for restriction became animated by opposition into an agitation for abolition. In 1652, Rhode Island had passed a law providing that neither black nor white mankind should be forced to service for more than ten years nor after the age of twenty-four. Yet, for more than a century, Newport was the great slave-market of all New England. Sermons, pamphlets, addresses at the North and the outspoken utterances of leading Southern statesmen had produced such a general sentiment that the Continental Congress of 1774 pledged the United Colonies wholly to discontinue the slave-trade. This pledge was subsequently confirmed by the several colonies, and in 1776 Congress repeated the pledge not to import slaves. Indeed, it was Virginia's greatest statesman who incorporated into the Declaration of Independence a denunciation of the British Government for inflicting the slave-system upon the colonies; and it was in acquiescence to the protests of South Carolina and Georgia and in deference to the slave-trading sentiment of New England that the clause was omitted. Here, then, was the turning-point. The dread of the South and the sympathy of the North were affected by interest. When Congress came to prepare the Articles of Confederation a new element entered, the political. In the matter of raising revenues, an important element to the discussion was the status of the slave. This developed into a battle of interests. Should slaves be taxed as property? Should they be represented in Congress as inhabitants? On the controversies growing out of the debate of these two questions, aggravated by the personal rivalries of the leading men of that day, grew the political questions and traditions which fundamentally separate

the two leading political organizations to-day. The slave-power triumphed. You cannot give too much importance to these debates. These and the discussions leading up to the adoption of our Constitution comprise the essentials of our constitutional law. The result of the struggle was a decided set-back for the negro. The division of the country into North and South was openly recognized, and the rivalries and jealousies engendered which ultimately inspired secession and the war for the Union. The North was fairly bullied into granting such concessions as not only turned to the political and material advantage of the South, but made the most thoughtful and conscientious writers of the time thoroughly ashamed of the flat contradictions of the acts of 1774 and 1776 and of the grandiloquent generality uttered in the Declaration of Independence. Slaves were not to be taxed as property. Three-fifths of their numbers were to be represented in Congress. Fugitives were to be restored. The slave-traffic was to be continued into the nineteenth century. Thus the very men who had endorsed Jefferson's plan of gradual emancipation made slavery necessary to the political ascendancy of their section. In the North, the abolition movement had a new impetus in political interest, while in the South, pro-slavery sentiment threatened to become universal.

In the meantime, the Ohio river became the dividing-line by the enactment of the Ordinance of 1787 prohibiting slavery from the Northwest territory. This is a cardinal point in the history of the negro in this country. The debates leading up to this division of the territory and the subsequent attempts to annul the ordinance cannot be too closely studied.

In the meantime, the work of those opposed to slavery

had been thoroughly organized. In 1787, the Pennsylvania Society had been resuscitated and its name changed into "The Pennsylvania Society for Promoting the Abolition of Slavery, the Relief of Free Negroes Unlawfully Held in Bondage, and for Improving the Condition of the African Race." This Society, you will find, established branches throughout the North, and it found a number of colored men ready to enter into the work and to distinguish themselves by their intelligence, their devotion to principle and their public spirit. The literature showing the work of these pioneers of the race is most important for our purposes; but it is also very difficult of access. Local libraries throughout the North and private collections of pamphlets reveal the work and the lives of heroes whom we have unfortunately allowed to be forgotten. This is your especial field of inspiration; for it shows conclusively that the negro began to work for freedom as soon as he began to know freedom. In Massachusetts and Vermont, before the close of the eighteenth century, negroes had entered the courts, "sued out" their freedom and secured abolition by judicial interpretation. If my paper is to be a suggestion, I must refrain from going into the details of these exciting episodes.

Take up the study of the effects produced by the invention of the cotton-gin. That, together with the incorporation of Louisiana, sealed the fate of the South as naturally, imperatively, the slave section.

Slaves continued to rise in commercial value as cotton-growing became more profitable. The surreptitious introduction of thousands of slaves from Africa proved insufficient for the demand, and there developed the infamous business of slave-breeding. These are among the



direct results of Eli Whitney's invention. These results had scarcely begun to manifest themselves when the purchase of Louisiana was effected; and the same statesmen who a quarter of a century before had advocated schemes for gradual emancipation found themselves impelled by loyalty to their section, because of the vast political and material advantages to accrue, to insist upon the introduction of slaves into the acquired territory. Fortunately, this territory, though not clearly defined, extended north; and the contest over the admission of Louisiana opened the way for the continuation of the struggle to preserve the upper portion as free territory, a continuation due west of that covered by the Ordinance of 1787. The admission of Louisiana is suggested as a focal point in that it was effected without the admission of a corresponding northern State. It was a decided gain for the South; but, as Mr. Blaine remarks, the admission of Louisiana was secured "as an evident compensation for the loss which had accrued to the slaveholding interest in the unequal though voluntary partition of the Old Thirteen between North and South." It is a focal point because it marks the culmination of the change in southern sentiment from what it was at the opening of the Revolution. It marks the point at which the South assumed assured control of our government and began that course of dictation which continued down to the time of secession. The three-fifths representation of the slave population gave a large margin for controlling the House of Representatives; but with Louisiana thus admitted, there was the negative control of the Senate always to be relied upon. Mr. Blaine quotes the speech of Daniel Webster in 1850, declaring that from the formation of the Union to that hour the South had

monopolized three-fourths of the places of honor and emolument under the Federal Government. He adds: "It was an accepted fact that the class interest of slavery, by holding a tie vote in the Senate, could defeat any measure or any nomination by which its leaders might be opposed; and thus banded together by an absolutely cohesive political force, they could and did dictate terms. . . . One absolute half of a legislative assembly, compactly united, can succeed in dividing and controlling the other half which has no class interest to consolidate it and no tyrannical public opinion behind it, decreeing political death to any member who doubts or halts in his devotion to one supreme idea." The South became "solid" in every sense on the incorporation of Louisiana. It is the focal point, therefore, from which to take your foresights and hindsight, as engineers say, in examining the story of the negro's progress toward citizenship.

Though the struggle over the admission of Missouri appears, on the surface, to have come without warning, its elements were conceived in the clause providing for three-fifths representation of the slave population. The admission of Louisiana was in the face of a foreign war, and it only prepared the two sections for the logically inevitable struggle. Maine's admission was proposed to offset the effect in the Senate, but it was not possible to defer consideration of the other parts of the Louisiana purchase, which must soon apply for admission: It was the important skirmish of the great political battles to be fought because of that purchase, a series leading down to the Repeal in 1854, and its sequel, the Dred Scott Decision of three years later.

Though separated in time, these two events comprise

the next focal point. While studying this period, it is important to follow the growth of the abolition movement, to note its compact character at the beginning of the century, to follow its own divisions and subdivisions, and to trace the gradual generation of indignant feeling into the great eruption of passion which answered therepeal of the Missouri Compromise and the Dred Scott decision, and fused all anti-slavery activities into one great force for the resistance of further pro-slavery aggression.

After his escape from slavery and his terror-stricken flight from New York city, Frederick Douglass saw on the streets of New Bedford the broad-brim hat and the straight coat worn by men of the Society of Friends. "I am among Quakers," he said to himself, "and therefore among friends." The members of this Society, both by organized action and as individuals, continued in the philanthropic work begun in 1688 by the protest of the Yearly Meeting, and extended by the organization of the Pennsylvania Society a century later. The pioneers of the anti-slavery movement, they continued their protests by repeated memorials to Congress, by the assistance of fugitive slaves, and by the establishment of schools for the education of colored people. They were soon joined by persons not members of their society, and the consideration of their memorials precipitated most acrimonious as well as most thorough discussion of the right of petition. Their methods, peaceful and courageous, were not bold enough to suit the later recruits to the holy warfare against slavery. You will find it most exciting to follow the divisions of these men and women as to the methods of achieving their righteous object. One school declared against the Constitution, and advised its adherents to abstain from voting. Another declared the Constitution to

be merely misinterpreted. This gradually developed into the political party which made a courageous stand, election after election, against the encroachments of the slave-power. The arguments for and against colonization may be noticed in passing. Interest maintained its ascendancy over principle, and the abolition movement was not supported by large numbers. What it lacked in this respect, however, had infinite compensation in the character and the wisdom of those who breathed their fine spirit into it. They comprise the American aristocracy of that heroic epoch, for they were eminent for their learning, their culture, and for the purity of their private lives. Open their biographies to your boys and girls, and impress upon them the lesson of serene pursuance of the right under circumstances which marked the anti-slavery work as heroic to a point not surpassed in history.

Then take up the progress made by the colored people themselves during this period. As soldiers—regularly-enlisted soldiers—they had distinguished themselves in the Revolution. In the army and navy, during the War of 1812, they had exposed themselves gallantly to the same dangers as their white fellow-citizens. The heavy labor and the skilled trades, the foundation of civilized progress, were theirs. They organized their own literary societies and their own churches, educated their own clergymen. They were members of the abolition societies organized throughout the North. In some States they voted. They were clearly making progress under the inspiration of skilled labor. Then you will find a gradual decline in this respect. Immigration set in, and the negro faced a new obstacle to his progress. The foreigners soon saw that the negroes were their rivals, and the steadily-losing struggle began. In the North it was

marked by sturdy resistance on the part of the colored workmen, supported as they were by the anti-slavery philanthropists. In the South the slave-holders resisted because the skilled slave had become a profitable investment, and because they feared the rise in wages inevitable to the employment of free labor. Nevertheless, you will note the gradual decline of the skilled-labor growth before the furious onslaughts of white laborers North and South. It was particularly notable at the North, and severe in its effects in those trades requiring associated labor. Reluctantly, skilled men who had learned their trades from their fathers—the sole helpful heritage from slavery—laid down their tools and took up their trays and aprons. Instinctively, they felt the far-reaching effects of this transfer to the mansion-house influence.

During this bitter struggle for equality of industrial opportunity, a struggle brought on by the introduction of foreign laborers, the change of sentiment in the Northern States is recorded in laws restricting the privileges enjoyed by colored persons in public places. It was also manifested in the opposition to schools for colored pupils. In attacking this legislation, in resisting the persecution of heroic teachers and in defying the infamous fugitive slave legislation, the abolitionists, white and colored, attracted the sympathetic co-operation of patriotic, cultured women of the North. Indeed, it was this struggle which conceived the movement for woman suffrage. In our own day, woman suffragists do attempt to exclude colored women from the enjoyment of the organization's object, clearly forgetting that the negro not only was represented, but was also very active in the organization of the first Woman Suffrage Convention. It would be precisely as contradictory for a branch of the

Sons of the Revolution to refuse admission to descendants of Colonel Greene's brave colored soldiers, or of Ledyard's heroic followers on the Heights of Groton. Indeed, the negro question and the woman question have come on side by side; and in determining issues raised by women, our courts have repeatedly been compelled to review legislation enacted originally with reference to the negro.

Returning to our story of the political growths, we note that while the colored people were enjoying better school facilities, and while they were suffering an industrial decline, the repeal of the Missouri Compromise and the Dred Scott decision marked a culminating-point in pro-slavery assurance, and provoked an overwhelming spirit of resistance throughout the North. The South was not satisfied with the annexation of Texas, the Omnibus Bill, and the great advantages accruing from both. They were still carried along by the forces growing out of the acquisition of Louisiana nearly a half-century before, and they were growing more and more confident. The fundamental question underlying the Louisiana purchase struggles was not slavery itself but the extension of slavery. The Missouri Compromise of 1820, the Florida treaty and the Texas annexation led naturally to the Omnibus Bill, where concessions were made by both sides and a *modus vivendi* defined. The South gained the privilege of making the United States the hunting-ground for fugitive slaves. The North gained advantages, among them the abolition of the slave-trade in the District of Columbia and government of the territories to the Pacific without permission or prohibition of the slave-trade. These terms seem to have been satisfactory enough to establish an armistice, and it is curious to speculate how long emancipation might have been

delayed if the South had not become intoxicated with power and had not inaugurated a most aggressive policy. It seemed that the Omnibus Bill was calculated to quiet all political acrimony. The admission of California broke the tie-vote in the Senate gained by the admission of Louisiana, maintained scrupulously in the admission of so-called "twin States." The prospect of free States coming in and the small chance for securing the lost control by slavery organization in Utah and Texas grew more apparent as the Omnibus Bill was more carefully studied. The application of Nebraska for admission set the Southerners to an examination of their political book-keeping and the balancing of their advantages and disadvantages accruing from territorial acquisition. It was apparent that they had lost ground. Their only chance to regain it lay in the repeal of the Missouri Compromise, and in a radical and authoritative interpretation of the Constitution favorable to the national right of property in man. Judge Taney's decision can be studied properly only in its dual nature as a political and a legal production. If the Constitution recognized title to property in man, the study must then go back of the decision to the Constitution itself, and back of that document to an inquiry into the technical reasoning on which such recognition could be established. The fact that no slave ever parted with his title to himself was the starting-point of all the anti-slavery arguments in law at the formation of our government; but adherents of Judge Taney declared that the Supreme Court could not go back of the Constitution, and that his ruling was, therefore, good law. As analogous reasoning appears in the decisions on the operation of the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments, with Justice Harlan, a sturdy and emi-

nently philosophical advocate of natural rights of man under law, it is desirable that this ruling, with the strictly technical dissenting opinion of Justice Curtis upholding the right of the Federal government to determine the question of slavery for territories, should be thoroughly examined. Whether it was good law or not, the storm raised by the fitting of the decision to the words of the repeal of the Missouri Compromise soon revealed it as bad politics. There is no telling how long the pro-slavery forces could have resisted human progress toward freedom had the South been satisfied simply to hold what they had. Their hot-headedness made a break into the course of natural growths and developments, and hastened them on to the point where they had to choose between quietly admitting their loss of the control which they had enjoyed from the beginning of the government on the one hand, and, on the other, violently setting up a government for themselves.

The election of Mr. Lincoln precipitated secession and war. War made possible emancipation in the States in arms against the United States, and prepared the way for the Thirteenth Amendment. Victory brought the North face to face with the problems of protecting the emancipated and of maintaining the control of the government, which the South had enjoyed nearly three-quarters of a century. These considerations made the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments inevitable features of Reconstruction. With great political sagacity and that cohesiveness which have always made the South the more powerful section in the politics of the country, the white people of that section refrained from taking part in public affairs and waited their chance. The "carpet-bag" governments of the South were the result;



for no administration of government can long continue free from corruption without the vigilance of an enlightened public sentiment. The South was just as solid when its leaders took the iron-clad oath of allegiance as their forefathers were on the admission of Louisiana in 1812. The carpet-bag governments fell, as they were doomed to fall, with the wealth and intellect of the section opposing them by a frigid indifference. Still, as I shall try to indicate, while these governments fell they had their place in our race story, in that they opened avenues for personal development and produced some leaders whose public careers and private lives have refuted the slanders of the South and opened the way for a natural growth. This, however, is a part of the story of the negro's voluntary growth, which I shall soon resume. They had time to serve in public office and to be judged before the South was able to inaugurate its policy of crime with a view to securing its ascendancy in national affairs, which it enjoyed so long. Instead of enjoying three-fifths of the colored population, they now have Congressmen for the entire five-fifths. The natural change is already manifesting itself, however. Politics is no longer the exclusive field of work for a Southern gentleman. The "poor white" has revolted at the polls and has already secured control of at least one Southern State. In this division of the white vote lies whatever hope there may be for the black vote; for already there are indications that the contending factions are not content to let so many ballots lie ineffective. They "must mix things up," as the prize-fighters say, when the contests of white against white and of industry against tradition become fast and furious.

In the North the steady decline of opportunity for

colored men in industrial lines became more and more marked as secession approached. The South was not without strong sympathizers at the North, who were bound to it by every tie of commercial interest. The great tumult over the Kansas and Nebraska troubles, the repeal and the Dred Scott decision seriously interfered with business; and, as in the South, the negro was blamed by this class as the cause of all the business uncertainty. The protests of white workmen found a greater number of willing ears, and at the close of the war the struggle was made more bitter by the arrival of large numbers of skilled workmen from the South. The trades union movement followed closely on the Reconstruction, and what the negro seemed to have gained in the unfolding of political events was lost in the decisions of the various labor organizations to shut out colored workmen. In localities where there were very few colored men to compete they were admitted; but the organization of these societies was the hardest blow ever suffered by the colored man in his progress from a social cipher to the enjoyment of his rights in this country. Not only have they had the effect throughout the entire North of depriving our men and women of the natural incentives to ambition, but they have also fostered in the hearts and minds of their own members and of labor communities a deep feeling against competition at the hands of colored men. In Philadelphia, sixty years ago, nearly all the leading colored men of the community were directing small business establishments of their own or working at skilled trades. To-day their sons and grandsons find themselves driven either into the learned professions, into independent business without training, or under the mansion-house influence. This

same story is the experience of all the Northern cities, and the improved school facilities for colored boys and girls make the outlook particularly forbidding. Stores, workshops and factories are still generally closed against them. European flunkies are growing more and more the fad every year, and if the conditions of their labor had permitted them to organize as the skilled workmen have done, the result would have been most disastrous for the colored people.

In the South there has been some variation of this story. With a great deal of plausibility, the whites of the South told the North that they could settle the negro question if let alone; that they knew the negro and how to keep him in his place; that they had human relations with the negro which northern whites had not had for a half-century, and that they would solve the problems without northern aid. The same people who had fought the abolition fight, however, insisted upon establishing and supporting schools. The negro went into politics, and the southern white soon demonstrated his hostility to anything approaching manhood equality.

Here, then, were the conditions: Northern teachers, representing our best culture, were facing southern insult in attempting to educate the colored people. The southern people resented any manifestation of a sense of equality on the part of the negro. They gave him all the work he could do and in any capacity he could fill. Two difficulties presented themselves very early in this development. The negro workman, however skilled, could not meet the requirements of open competition of a free country. He could not make large plans, estimates and contracts. The South invited capital from Europe and from the North. Things were done on a scale quite

different from that of slavery times. The northern contractor stepped in. He brought his own workmen. They were union workmen. The southern negroes began their procession from skilled labor influence to the mansion-house influence. White laborers, formerly discouraged by the sentiment of the employer class, took heart as they invited the unions to form their local branches throughout the South. They have nearly done their work in levelling the situation of the negro throughout the United States as far as industrial opportunity is concerned.

To-day, as we look over the country, we see evidences that the national sense of justice has been touched, and that it is hesitating before making the inevitable response. You can safely teach your boys, as the result of this retrospect, that there is no reason for shame in being a negro; that the colored man has taken advantage of his opportunities for growth, and that, in so doing, he has done what human beings have always done. Teach them that, with a public conscience hesitating and with a public curiosity aroused, they must make themselves grow to the measure of the obstacles to be overcome. Our situation, I think, may be summed up in glancing back over the negro growths and those of the master class. The descendants of the master class are well removed from their progenitors; but, with all of their progress, they still bear the mark of their heritage, a brand burned in by the institution of slavery as deeply as any stigma borne by people of African descent to-day. They are far in the rear of the Anglo-Saxon movement toward the race ideal of duty to the neighbor. The presence, still, of fair-haired, blue-eyed negro children in the remote primary schools of the South tells the same

old sad story of mansion-house morality. The southern white woman is not so patient as she was a century ago, and her liege lord finds that she has developed standards above those accepted in southern countries. Our colored women are progressing also; and, though unhappily the two are still working independently of each other, they have succeeded in securing a great improvement in the conduct of the gentlemen of the mansion-house, and inspiring the right ideals among the colored people themselves. Though only a generation from the close of the war, the growth of the former master class, with reference to the negro, is clearly manifested. The solid South is no longer to be counted on as solid. Southern politicians are beginning to see the necessity of breaking away from tradition and custom. A Senator from Alabama and another from Florida, both of whom owe their seats to intimidation and fraud practiced against their colored fellow-citizens at home, have made international reputations as champions of the Cuban insurgents, the leaders and the great majority of whom are men of African descent. Many leaders of industry at the North begin to manifest their appreciation of the economic and social necessity for opening the workshops and factories and business-houses of the section to colored men and women.

Taken as a class, the agricultural laborers have been true to the conservatism of their class. To-day they are nearer the African type than any other. Their mode of worship still bears the traces which mark their close relationship to the voodoo of the French colonies and what is often erroneously called the plantation fandango of the Spanish islands. I have repeatedly seen educated colored clergymen close their services at nine o'clock Sun-

day evening and go home in despair, leaving their meetings to be continued until the early hours of the morning in an eruption of hysterical frenzy. Still, our clergymen who have been trained for this special work should not despair. The retrospect is encouraging. It shows an encouraging growth that the agricultural laborer of to-day will listen to a good sermon and be patient while the trained choir sing an anthem. The great mass of older folk will insist on going to heaven in their own way. The support of the trained clergyman and the disposition to let the children be trained to sing anthems are most encouraging manifestations of the evolution from the old quarters. It is particularly interesting and encouraging because it is almost entirely and exclusively an evolution. Unfortunately, this development is unfavorably affected by a strong movement towards the centres of population. This migration in large numbers takes them from the influence of their own evolution and places them under the mansion-house influence. They make churches and other societies of their own, and they form a class quite distinct in social and industrial characteristics from the old residents of the cities and their descendants. It will be a generation before the superior public schools shall have attacked, to any considerable degree, the evils of this transition. It cannot be checked; and among the municipal problems of to-day, in our large cities, North and South, none is more perplexing than those growing out of the steadily increasing influx of negroes from the farm districts, with but few of the capabilities to meet the requirements of competition in a great centre, and with no preparation for its temptations to squalor, immorality and crime.

I wish our preachers and teachers could see some of

the pool-rooms and the restaurants established to attract the patronage of the colored men and women. In every large city they are of the same type, and they present precisely the same interesting studies, whether in Boston, Philadelphia or Washington. In these places we see the mansion-house influence boiled down and precipitated. In other reunions, it is seen disguised or modified by refining circumstances or conditions; but here is the bald thing itself. Let us look in on one in New York. There is a young man accompanied by a young woman, seated at a table with "a hot bird and a cold bottle" between them. He wears clothes made by a fashionable tailor, and he has taken care to throw his top-coat over the back of a chair in such a manner as to advertise the fact. His employer wore that coat last season. He wears his hair parted just as his employer wears his, and his accent is a careful imitation of his employer's manner of addressing him at the table. Let us ask the proprietor who employs that sporting young man. It is Mr. Blank, one of New York's great young lawyers, a hard student, a reliable business man, a sporting man about town, whose bachelor quarters could tell the story of after-theatre high life in a great metropolis. Yes, we know that lawyer, and we have perhaps seen the young man before us, but not with the bird and the bottle and the girl. Mr. Blank is one of the strong young men in his profession, and he is already well known as a specialist. Yesterday afternoon he wired John to prepare a quiet dinner for two. John served it. Every detail of preparing it he followed. He paid the bill this morning, and he knows something of what it costs to enjoy high life. He has learned all that from his contact with Mr. Blank, and it has gone into his character. When Mr. Blank left his rooms yesterday

morning, however, he entered a world utterly unknown to John, the world of open competition. Mr. Blank left John and fairly plunged into that world. He studied contracts on whose soundness, when approved by him, fortunes depend. He met his clients and gave advice which represented years of grind in the voluminous literature of his profession. He dashed off into court to make an argument which will command the respect of the Bar of his great city. He closed his day, after sending John the dinner telegram, by advising the directors of a great corporation. John knew absolutely nothing of Mr. Blank's day. That part of the lawyer's life has no influence on the character of John. John comes into touch only where Mr. Blank's indulgences or vices begin. It is far removed from the colonial planter, this life; but it is the same infernal mansion-house influence which, with varying grades of intensity, is to be seen in so many phases of the colored citizen's social life to-day. The preacher who blames the Johns and denounces them does not, in my judgment, attack the matter as he should. He should, I think, work at the condition, exert himself to bring the Johns out from the mansion-house influence to that of frugal skilled labor, or to that which the Messrs. Blank exert on all around them between the hours of ten in the morning and five in the afternoon.

The development of the skilled slave into the mechanic or small business man of his community was as natural a growth as either of the other two. If one goes into any community of colored people and makes the acquaintance of its most influential men, it is safe to say that he will find the great majority to be those who were skilled workmen as slaves, or their descendants. As I



write, I recall some notable exceptions—men who were exposed to the mansion-house influence, and who died after long careers of private virtue and public usefulness because it was in their natures to resist the influence. Nevertheless, following the participation of colored men in the anti-slavery movement (the only public activity open to them) beginning with the organized appeals to Congress and to legislatures more than a century ago, following them through the great heroic agitation, city for city, town for town, it cannot be set aside as a mere coincidence that so great a majority of these men had been skilled slave workmen before they faced the responsibilities of freedom. The literature showing the lives and work of these men is, as I have before indicated, difficult to secure. Yet, old church minute-books, the records of the anti-slavery societies and the minutes of the literary societies of former days, tell us a great deal. It is indeed deeply to be regretted that the Zion Methodists and the African Methodists have not made a national collection of such documents, books and pamphlets as would make them easy of access. I remember that three months passed before I succeeded in my search for a little pamphlet showing the trades at which colored men worked in Philadelphia in 1839. The work of finding this material, however, gives ample compensation in showing what a distinguished part our own men took in the anti-slavery movement and at the same time how well they lived, in every sense, while supporting their families by their work. It was not only the learning of the trade, but the incidents, the reading, the calculation, the making things fit, the respect of slaves and master, the approach to reliability of character imposed by the work, morally sustained by the development of the home

feeling, which made the skilled slave the forerunner of the best type of the colored citizen.

Taking our hindights, then, if you verify my statements and approve the story as I tell it, you can give your pupils every assurance that the movements which they cannot entirely control, but which they can influence, the social and the political, are in the right direction. So far as their voluntary action is concerned, the fundamental problem before the colored people of the United States is to secure the transfer of such a number as may be influential in race growth from the mansion-house to skilled labor.

It is to be effected, I think :

1. By preparation to do the work.
2. By using every honorable and dignified means to secure work.

There are two drawbacks to the preparation to do the work. In the first place, it is hard to induce boys to try for skilled trades at which they know it will be difficult to secure employment. Then, it is one of the ruinous effects of the mansion-house influence that its comparative ease and comforts have always been so seductive. Teach your boys that no work is dishonorable in itself. By force of circumstances many of them must go under the mansion-house influence in making their start in life. Teach them to go bravely, and to work thoroughly and cheerfully. Teach them that it is thoroughly American to begin at the bottom, if the top be held always in view. As far back as in 1855, Doctor James McCune Smith, probably the most graceful and certainly one of the most thoughtful writers of our colored Americans, in his introduction to the autobiography of Frederick Douglass said : "And the secret of his power, what is it? He

is a representative American man—a type of his countrymen. . . . Frederick Douglass has passed through every gradation of rank comprised in our national make-up, and bears upon his person and upon his soul everything that is American. And he has not only full sympathy with everything American: his proclivity or bent to active toil and visible progress is in the strictly national direction, delighting to outstrip ‘all creation.’” It is not the starting-point which marks the man, but his direction and his aim. No work in itself is degrading; it is the spirit in which it is done. Teach your boys to learn a trade and to make that the basis of their work in life. Let them lay hold on any employment that comes to hand and start from that, looking forward to their trades, determined to cultivate the “bent to active toil and visible progress,” determined to take no step backward. Teach them to hate fine clothing and physical comfort if secured at the cost of manliness; but at the same time make them see the necessity of earning an honest livelihood in any calling while pushing forward to the activities which make for enlightened and independent citizenship.

This preparation to work and the securing of openings to work should be made the objects of our most anxious effort, individual and organized. Our aim must be to keep constantly before the minds of students the fact that before the real industrial growth was checked, in the days of the Negro’s most public-spirited activity, the men who became really useful and influential were the handicraftsmen, the skilled artificers. There is a great mass of colored men, as there is of white men, whose predisposition to idleness and vice will defy all efforts to improve them. In common with all other citizens we have

our interest in the existence of large numbers of men, voluntarily and involuntarily unemployed. We can hope only to secure for our men and women openings in the industrial and commercial activities in such proportion as shall be influential in the race uplifting and in affecting favorably public sentiment. Thus only can the Negro come to be judged, as the white race is judged, by the results achieved by its best representatives, and not by the shortcomings of its worst.

The opening of lines of work now closed to us is but the continuance of the abolition movement. Agitation must be waged with dignified persistence. Every appeal must be made to the American spirit of fair play. No more honorable and proper demand could be made by any class of men than that for the wiping out of lines which bar them from equality of opportunity. Fourteen years ago we started a movement of this character to agitate for equality of opportunity in the stores, factories and railroads of Philadelphia. It was not the success which we had hoped for; but we who have talked with employers and discussed with the<sup>d</sup> leaders of organized labor are encouraged to believe that the captains of industry throughout the country are ready to secure for us a respectful hearing, and that they await only a further modification of sentiment among workmen and patrons to throw down the barriers which stand between the colored people and the path of their natural movement toward complete American citizenship.



